(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Defence including the three services has not been able to utilise funds allocated to it in the budget for the last many years;

(b) if so, the quantum of funds which remained unutilised for the last three years ending 31st March, 2003, year-wise and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure full utilisation of funds allocated to the Ministry and the services in the budget?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The difference between the net provision made in Defence Services in Budget Estimates and actual expenditure in the year 2000-2001 was Rs. 8964.96 crores and in the year 2001-2002 it was Rs. 7734.27 crores. For 2002-2003, the Revised Estimates were Rs. 9000.00 crores less than the Budget Estimates. The accounts for the year 2002-2003 have not yet been closed and hence the difference between the Budget Estimates and actual expenditure is not yet available.

The detailed reasons for variation between the budgetary allocations and the actual expenditure have been given in the Appropriation Accounts (Defence Services) for respective years presented to the Parliament.

(c) In order to fully utilise the allocated Funds, the progress of Defence expenditure and status of various procurement proposals is kept under constant review and follow up action, as necessary, is taken. A new procurement organisation has also been established to deal with acquisitions on capital account for the Defence Services.

Backlog of Recruitment of SCs, STs and OBCs in MoD

4190. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the present recruitment and promotional backlog position of SCs, STs and OBCs in his Ministry, PSUs and other factories and organisations under his Ministry, establishment-wise;

(b) since when these backlogs are pending and reasons for non clearance of the backlog, establishment-wise; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to clear these backlogs within a time frame?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Indo-US military cooperation

4191. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether US Army Chief had visited India in the first week of February, 2003;

(b) if so, whether he had sought deeper military-to-military cooperation with his Indian counterpart;

(c) whether the Army Headquarters had given a presentation on militancy in Kashmir;

(d) if so, whether US Army Chief was apprised of the weapons factories allegedly springing up in Pakistan to "aid terrorism";

(e) whether any other issues were discussed with him; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) No specific mention of 'weapons factories allegedly springing up in Pakistan to aid terrorists' was made. However, details of Pakistan's support to all agencies abetting terrorism in India (including supply of weapons, ammunitions and explosives) were brought out clearly.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) The other issues discussed were

(i) India's Security Concerns.

(ii) Indo-US Defence Relations.

(iii) Situation in Afghanistan and Iraq.

(iv) Global Terrorism